

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MBFR VIENNA 0026

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
SUBJ: MBFR: BILATERAL CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES
OF FEBRUARY 1, 1978.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN BILATERAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN US
REPS AND SOVIET REPS FEBRAURY 1, SOVIET REP TARASOV EMPHASIZED
TWO MAIN THEMES: (A) COMPALINTS THAT INCREASES IN US MILITARY
MANPOWER IN THE REDUCTION AREA WERE UNDERMINING THE BASIS OF
THE VIENNA TALKS AND (B) INSISTENCE THAT DATA EXCHANGE, IF IT
WERE TO TAKE PLACE AT ALL, MUST BE PRECEDED BY AN EXCHANGE OF
STATEMENTS IN WHICH THE WEST EXPLICITLY ACCEPTED, WITH A
SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE EAST'S OCTOBER 25, 1977 PROPOSAL,
THE EXCHANGE OF DATA AS DESCRIBED IN THE EASTERN PROPOSAL.
THE BASIS SHOULD BE THE DECEMBER 14 TEXT. TARASOV SAID HE
WOULD BE WILLING, IF THE WEST PREFERRED, TO RETURN TO DECEMBER
1 TEXT AND ALSO TO MAKE SOME DRAFTING CHANGES IN THE LANGUAGE
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OF EITHER TEXT. BUT WESTERN ACCEPTANCE OF THE EAST'S OCTOBER
25 PROPOSAL MUST EMERGE CLEARLY FROM ANY TEXT USED.

2. COMMENT: TARASOV'S REMARKS TO US REP, AS CONFIRMED BY
PARALLEL TARASOV REMARKS TO CANADIAN REP AND BY POLISH JANUARY
31 PLENARY STATEMENT, PUT THE STATE OF PLAY ON DATA EXCHANGE
BACK NEARLY TO ITS PRECISE POSITION AT THE END OF THE LAST

ROUND. END COMMENT. END SUMMARY.

3. US REP AND DEP REP MET WITH SOVIET REP TARASOV AND SOVIET DEP REP SHUSTOV AT US INVITATION ON FEBRUARY 1. TARASOV BEGAN BY REFERRING TO SECRETARY VANCE'S CONVERSATION IN EARLY JANUARY WITH AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN ABOUT THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. US REP CONFIRMED THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD EXPRESSED REGRET TO DOBRYNIN THAT DATA HAD NOT BEEN EXCHANGED IN THE LAST ROUND AND HIS HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE EXCHANGED SOON IN THE PRESENT ROUND. U.S. AUTHORITIES WANTED TO MOVE THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD. US REP SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE EXCHANGE OF DATA SHOULD LEAD TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE NEW WESTERN PROPOSAL ON SUBSTANCE AND MOVE THE TALKS INTO AN ACTIVE PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS. WHAT WAS THE SOVIET POSITION ON DATA EXCHANGE?

4. TARASOV SAID THE SOVIETS CONTINUED WILLING TO EXCHANGE THE DATA WHICH THEY HAD AGREED TO EXCHANGE. BUT THE PREREQUISITE FOR THIS WAS A CLEAR REPLY FROM THE WEST ACCEPTING THE EAST'S OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL. SUCH A REPLY WAS NOT A PRESTIGE ISSUE FOR THE SOVIETS, BUT WAS NEEDED TO SET THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DATA DISCUSSION. THE SOVIETS WOULD ACCEPT EITHER STATEMENT DISCUSSED IN THE LAST ROUND, THAT OF DECEMBER 14 OR THAT OF DECEMBER 1, WHICHEVER WAS MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE WESTERN ALLIES. US REP SAID THAT THE WEST BELIEVED THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED WAS TO EXCHANGE DATA WITHOUT ANY STATEMENTS AND THE WEST WAS READY TO DO SO. TARASOV REITERATED THAT THERE WOULD
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HAVE TO BE AN EXCHANGE OF STATEMENTS AS HE HAD DESCRIBED. US REP SUGGESTED THAT SOVIET NEEDS WOULD BE MET BY A SHORT STATEMENT SUCH AS THAT ADVANCED IN THE LAST INFORMAL OF THE LAST ROUND TO THE EFFECT THAT NONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAD ENTERED INTO ANY COMMITMENTS, WHETHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT, AS REGARDS PROPOSING OR ACCEPTING FURTHER EXCHANGE OF DATA OTHER THAN THAT WHICH WAS TO BE EXCHANGED.

5. TARASOV SAID THE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE OF THE STATEMENTS WAS A TECHNICAL ISSUE. THERE WAS ROOM FOR MODIFYING SOME FORMATIONS CONTAINED IN THE DECEMBER 14 OR DECEMBER 1 STATEMENTS, ALTHOUGH ANY STATEMENT WOULD HAVE TO REFER TO THE OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL. HOWEVER, THE MAIN PROBLEM OF THE MOMENT FOR THE VIENNA TALKS WAS NOT THE FORMULATION OF THE STATEMENT, IT WAS THE FACT THAT THE US WAS ENGAGED IN INCREASING ITS FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. THE US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT OF JANUARY 2, 1978, REPORTED THAT THE US HAD INCREASED ITS MILITARY MANPOWER IN THE REDUCTION AREA DURING THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS BY 16,000 MEN. PRESIDENT CARTER HAD RECENTLY ANNOUNCED A FURTHER INCREASE OF 8,000 MEN, FOR A TOTAL INCREASE OF 24,000 MEN. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS AT ALL?

6. US REP SAID THE FIGURES GIVEN IN THE US NEWS ARTICLE WERE INCORRECT AND BASED ON A MISUNDERSTANDING. ON THE OTHER HAND, PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT HAD, OF COURSE, BEEN AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ABOUT AN INCREASE WHICH WAS NOW TAKING PLACE. BUT THE FIGURES GIVEN BY THE US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT WERE WRONG.

7. TARASOV SAID HE REALIZED THAT THE FIGURES PUBLISHED IN THE US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT WERE NOT OFFICIAL ONES. BUT THE SOVIET MILITARY PEOPLE HAD SOME FIGURES ABOUT US TROOPS WHICH INDICATED A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE DURING THE PAST YEAR. US REP SAID HE ASSUMED THIS WAS A MISREADING OF THE REORGANIZATION UNDER THE NUNN AMENDMENT. TARASOV SAID THE INCREASE
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NOTED BY THE SOVIET MILITARY WAS NOT AT ALL THE RESULT OF THIS REORGANIZATION BUT A NET INCREASE. WHAT WAS THE POINT OF EXCHANGING FIGURES IN CIRCUMSTANCES LIKE THESE WHERE THE FORCES BEING COUNTED WERE ACTUALLY INCREASING AND NOT ONLY BY 8,000 MEN? US REP SAID THE REASON FOR STRENGTHENING NATO WAS THE SIGNIFICANT AND CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS OF WARSAW PACT FORCES

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IN THE AREA OF REDUCTION, ESPECIALLY OF ARMAMENTS. THIS PROCESS WENT WELL BEYOND MERE MODERNIZATION. AS WESTERN REPS HAD POINTED OUT IN INFORMAL SESSIONS, IT WAS RESULTING IN INCREASES IN THE NUMBERS OF MAJOR ARMAMENTS, INCLUDING ARTILLERY PIECES, ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILES AND OTHER MAJOR EQUIPMENT. SOME OF THESE INCREASES HAD BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASES IN SOVIET MILITARY MANPOWER SINCE 1973.

8. TARASOV SAID THIS STATEMENT WAS INCORRECT. PRESIDENT BREZHNEV HAD MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO INCREASES IN SOVIET MANPOWER IN THE AREA DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. COMMENT: BREZHNEV, IN HIS SPEECH TO THE 16TH TRADE UNION CONGRESS ON MARCH 21, 1974, AND REFERRING TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS, ASSERTED THAT QUOTE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS ALREADY WE ARE NOT INCREASING THE MILITARY MANPOWER OF OUR ARMED FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. UNQUOTE END COMMENT. HOWEVER, IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE WEST WAS INCREASING ITS FORCES, IT
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WAS COMPLETELY OBVIOUS THAT ANY AMOUNT OF ANALYSIS OF DATA WOULD NOT BRING PARTICIPANTS CLOSER TO AGREEMENT. US REP SAID THE PLANNED EXCHANGE MIGHT SHOW A DIFFERENCE IN APPLYING DEFINITIONS WHICH MIGHT REVEAL THE REASONS FOR AT LEAST PART OF THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE FIGURES OF BOTH SIDES. IT WAS DEFINITELY IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST TO TAKE ACTION WHICH WOULD DO THIS. TARASOV SAID IF IT WAS AN ISSUE OF DEFINITIONS, THEN THE DATA EXCHANGE WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. ONE COULD START DIRECTLY WITH THE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE REVISIONS OF THE DEFINITION. US REP SAID HE BELIEVED PARTICIPANTS HAD DONE AS MUCH WITH THIS SUBJECT AS WOULD BE USEFUL WITHOUT DISCUSSING DEFINITIONS TOGETHER WITH MORE DETAILED FIGURES. DID TARASOV WISH TO DISCUSS DEFINITIONS?

9. TARASOV REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE USEFUL IF THE WEST HAD ANY CHANGES TO PROPOSE. IF THIS WAS NOT THE CASE, THEN THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE MUCH POINT IN IT. TARASOV SAID HIS SUPERIORS IN MOSCOW WERE HIGHLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROJECTED DATA EXCHANGE. THEY FEARED THE WEST WOULD DEMAND NEW AND MORE DETAILED DATA AFTER THE DATA UNDER DISCUSSION WERE EXCHANGED, GOING ON THROUGH DATA ON DIVISIONS, REGIMENTS AND BATTALIONS. THERE WAS NO LOGICAL END TO THIS PROCESS. AND FROM THE MOSCOW VIEWPOINT, DURING THIS ENTIRE PROCESS, THE WEST WOULD CONTINUE TO BE INCREASING ITS OWN TROOPS IN THE REDUCTION AREA. HOW COULD SOVIET AUTHORITIES EXPLAIN A SITUATION IN WHICH THEY WERE GIVING MORE AND MORE DATA WITHOUT ANY DECREASE OF FORCES BEING ACHIEVED BUT WHERE, TO THE CONTRARY, WESTERN

FORCES WERE INCREASING?

10. US REP SAID DURING THE SPRING OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR PARTICIPANTS HAD TALKED ABOUT DEFINITIONS BUT WITHOUT DETAILED NUMBERS. ON THE SURFACE, THERE APPEARED TO BE AGREEMENT. WHEN PARTICIPANTS HAD DETAILED NUMBERS, THE SITUATION WOULD BE MORE SECRET

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CLEAR. IF THERE WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT HOW DEFINITIONS HAD ACTUALLY BEEN APPLIED, THE EXCHANGE OF NUMBERS SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN REVEALING WHICH AND CLARIFYING IT.

11. TARASOV SAID THAT PARTICIPANTS HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT FIGURES SINCE FEBRUARY 1976. THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF COMPROMISE STEPS FROM THE WEST ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. THERE WAS A LOT OF TALK IN THE WEST ABOUT NEW WESTERN PROPOSALS. MANY PEOPLE IN THE EAST SAID THESE PROPOSALS WOULD NOT BE INTRODUCED UNTIL NEXT SUMMER.

12. US REP SAID HE HOPED THE WEST WOULD PRESENT ITS NEW PROPOSALS FAIRLY SOON AFTER THE EXCHANGE OF DATA. HE HAD HOPED IT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE LAST ROUND IN THE SAME WAY.

13. SHUSTOV SAID THAT THE SOVIETS WERE READY TO EXCHANGE THE DATA CONTAINED IN THE OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL. BUT THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS THAT THEY WERE NOT READY TO EXCHANGE FURTHER DATA. THEY NEEDED SOME ASSURANCE THAT THE EXCHANGE NOW UNDER DISCUSSION WOULD NOT BE FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY WESTERN PROPOSALS TO TABLE MORE FIGURES. THE SOVIET DELEGATION HAD CONVINCED THE MOSCOW AUTHORITIES THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO EXCHANGE THE DATA PROPOSED IN THE OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL. THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN ADVANCED TO MEET WESTERN DESIRES AND NOT BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF AN AGREEMENT. HENCE, AN EXCHANGE OF STATEMENTS WAS NECESSARY TO DEFINE THE FRAMEWORK OF FUTURE DISCUSSIONS.

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14. US REPS ASKED WHAT CONCEPO THE SOVIETS HAD IN MIND AS SUCH A FRAMEWORK. IN THE PAST ROUND, THE SOVIETS HAD SUGGESTED THAT THERE BE AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE WEST NOT ASK FOR MORE DATA. WESTERN REPS POINTED OUT THIS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE.

15. TARASOV SAID SOVIETS WERE NOT ASKING THAT ANY SUCH UNDERSTANDING BE REFLECTED IN STATEMENTS BUT THERE SHOULD BE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS FACT NONETHELESS. THESE EASTERN FIGURES WERE SENSITIVE. THERE HAD BEEN NO RAPPROCHEMENT IN NEGOTIATING POSITIONS IN FIVE YEARS OF NEGOTIATION IN VIENNA. THE WEST HAD MADE NO NEW PROPOSAL SINCE DECEMBER 1975. THE WEST WAS INCREASING ITS FORCES DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS. UNDER THESE CONDITONS, SOVIET AUTHORITIES DID NOT SEE ANY NEED TO GIVE MORE AND MORE WARSAW PACT FIGURES TO THE WEST. THE EAST HAD PROPOSED EXCHANGE OF NATIONAL FIGURES AND OF AVERAGE MANNING FIGURES AND THE WEST HAD DECLINED BOTH. THE US REP SAID THE WEST HAD NOT REFUSED TO EXCHANGE AVERAGE MANNING LEVEL
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FIGUES BUT HAD AGREED TO STUDY THEM. WHAT WAS THE EAST'S POSITION ON THE DIVISION OF AIR FORCE MANPOWER?

16. TARASOV SAID EACH SIDE HAD AGREED TO STUDY THESE RESPECTIVE TOPICS, BUT THE WEST HAD NOT INDICATED ANY REAL INTEREST IN THE EXCHANGE OF FIGURES ON MANNING LEVELS. THE WEST SHOULD CLEARLY STATE ITS AGREEMENT TO THE EAST'SPROPOSAL OF OCTOBER 25. THIS WOULD GIVE TARASOV PROTECTION VIS-A-VIS HIS SUPERIORS. THE SOVIET DELEGATION IN VIENNA--TARASOV, SHUSTOV AND KAPITANOV--HAD PROPOSED THIS CONCEPT TO MOSCOW. MOSCOW AUTHORITIES HAD AGREED TO IT AFTER VERY CONSIDERABLE HESITATION. TARASOV HIMSELF WAS A CAREER OFFICIAL. HE HAD NO POLITICAL PROTECTION,

IF THE EXCHANGE WAS TO TAKE PLACE, HE HAD TO BE IN A POSITION TO

TELL HIS SUPERIORS IT WOULD NOT BE FOLLOWED AUTOMATICALLY BY WESTERN REQUESTS FOR FURTHER DATA.

17. US REP SAID IT WAS NOT THE WESTERN OBJECTIVE TO OBTAIN INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION. BUT THE WEST NEEDED DISAGGREGATED INFORMATION IN ORDER TO COME TO SOME UNDERSTANDING ON WHY EASTERN AND WESTERN NUMBERS DIFFERED. THIS EXCHANGE MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN GIVING CLUES AS TO THE SOURCES OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING. IF IT DID NOT, THEN IT WOULD STILL BE IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO FIND THE REASONS FOR THE DISCREPANCY. THE WEST HAD TO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT EASTERN FORCES. THE EAST DID NOT HAVE TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS IF EASTERN AUTHORITIES DID NOT THINK IT ADVISABLE. US DEP REP SAID APPARENTLY THE EAST'S ABILITY TO REFUSE TO PROVIDE FURTHER DATA WAS NOT SUFFICIENT PROTECTION. APPARENTLY SOVIET AUTHORITIES FEARED THAT THEY WOULD BE EMBARRASSED BY EASTERN REFUSAL TO FURTHER WESTERN REQUESTS FOR MORE DATA. BUT A SITUATION IN WHICH THE EAST ASKED THE WEST NOT TO ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION WOULD SURELY BE INTERPRETED IN SECRET

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THE WEST AS INDICATING THAT THE EAST WAS TRYING TO COVER SOMETHING UP.

18. TARASOV SAID IT WAS CLEAR THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT WAS INTENDED TO PUT PRESSURE ON SOVIET AUTHORITIES. HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS. IT WAS CLEAR THE WEST WAS USING THE DISCUSSION OF DATA IN ORDER TO POSTPONE AN AGREEMENT AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO THROUGH POSSIBLE FURTHER DATA REQUESTS.

19. US REP RETURNED TO HIS PROPOSAL FOR A SHORT STATEMENT. TARASOV SAID THIS CONCEPT WAS COVERED IN PARA 4 OF THE DECEMBER 1 DRAFT STATEMENT. US REP SAID, IF THE SOVIETS WANTED A MORE DETAILED STATEMENT THAN THE ONE HE PROPOSED, ONE COULD LOOK INTO THAT. BUT SUCH STATEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE BALANCED. TARASOV SAID, AFTER ALL, THE DECEMBER 1 STATEMENT PROVIDED FOR A TWO-WAY BRIDGE ENABLING EACH SIDE TO ARGUE HIS CASE AS HE WISHED IN THE FUTURE. THIS WAS BALANCED. US REP SAID WESTERN AUTHORITIES CONSIDERED THAT THE DECEMBER 1 STATEMENT CONTAINED AMBIGUOUS LANGUAGE WHICH COULD BE THE GROUNDS FOR FUTURE ARGUMENTS AND FRICTION. TARASOV SAID HE COULD SEE NO SOLUTION OTHER THAN AN EXCHANGE OF STATEMENTS. FOR THE EAST, IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE WESTERN ACCEPTANCE OF THE EAST'S COMPROMISE PROPOSAL. WITHOUT ACCEPTANCE OF THE OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL, THE DATA EXCHANGE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. US DEP REP SAID THAT, THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH POINTS MADE BY THE EAST IN PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS, THE EXPLICIT MENTION OF THE OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL HAD ACQUIRED NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS TO MANY WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING THE CONNOTATION OF SOME LIMITATION ON FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AS WELL AS OTHER NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS.

TARASOV SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE MENTION OF THE OCTOBER 25 PROPOSAL. THE SOVIETS HAD PLENTY OF TIME FOR THE WEST TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. IT WAS A GOOD PROJECT FOR THE WEST TO WORK ON WHILE IT INCREASED ITS FORCES.

20. US REP SUMMARIZED THE MAIN POINTS OF THIS DISCUSSION TO THE AD HOC GROUP ON FEBRUARY 1. RESOR

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